

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 22, 2008. Claims 1-17 and 48-53 are in this application. Claims 1-4, 7, 8 and 12-14 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicant regards as his invention. Claims 48-53 have been added to assure Applicant of a full measure of protection. Claims 1, 8 and 13 are independent. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-6, 8-11 and 13-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from newly-cited U.S. Patents 6,078,308 (Rosenberg et al.) and 6,219,053 (Tachibana et al.) in combination, and Claims 7, 12 and 17 were also rejected as being obvious from those two patents.

As explained in the specification, the present invention is concerned with improving the ability of a user of a network to combine functions of two or more devices that are connected to the network in order to achieve a function that is not present in any one device. For example, if there is no copying machine on the network, it is desired to enable the user to make a copy of a document by using the functions of a scanner and of a printer that are present. In particular, the aspects of the present invention set out in the independent claims are directed to helping to ensure that the user will have adequate information available about the functions of the various devices on the network to make effective use thereof.

Independent Claim 1 is directed to a data processing apparatus capable of data communications with various devices connected with a network. The claimed apparatus comprises a storing unit that stores function information and connection

information of the various devices. Also provided is a system displaying unit that displays a system configuration of the network on a display unit by using an icon corresponding to each of the devices, in accordance with the connection information stored by the storing unit. A designation unit serves to designate an icon corresponding to an input device and the icon corresponding to an output device, from among the displayed icons, and a function setting screen displaying unit is adapted to display a setting screen for setting a combination function achievable by combining the devices respectively corresponding to the icons designated by the designation unit, in accordance with the function information stored by the storing unit. Also, a control unit controls the devices respectively corresponding to the icons designated by the designation unit, on the basis of the combination function set by using the screen displayed by the function setting screen displaying unit.

By virtue of this structure, the user of an apparatus according to Claim 1 can select desired input and output devices and thus cause these devices to perform the processes based on the combination of the selected devices. Further, to select the devices can be easily performed by using the icons. For example, if a scanner is designated as the input device and a printer is designated as the output device, a copy function can be achieved by the combination of these devices. Accordingly, in this case, the data processing apparatus displays the setting screen for setting the copy function and causes the scanner and the printer to perform the copy process, based on the displayed setting screen.

From the Office Action, it appears that the Examiner contemplates an operator using the mouse of *Rosenberg '308* to make a sequential designation of two or

more devices, which accordingly perform their respective functions, thus in the Examiner's view achieving a combination function.

Applicant does not agree with this view. The *Rosenberg* '308 specification and claims appear to pertain entirely to techniques for controlling a mouse or the like, and not to using various devices on a network.

Rosenberg '308 relates to a system in which a user is able to use a mechanical apparatus 13 to operate icons displayed on a display device 20 of a host computer 18. The host computer 18 is not connected to plural devices through a network. Moreover, *Rosenberg* '308 does not control to execute a combination function by combining the plural devices selected from among the plural devices. Of course, the display device 20 of the host computer 18 in *Rosenberg* '308 does not disclose a system configuration of the network, does not also displays a setting screen for setting a combination function achievable by combining the devices respectively corresponding to the icons designated from among the display of the system configuration, and does not control the devices based on the set combination function.

Tachibana relates to a system in which connections of a host, a hub, a router and the like between network nodes are displayed by icons, but does not have any means that would permit a user to control to execute a combination function by selecting and combining devices from among the displayed devices. (It is noted that the Office Action relies on *Tachibana* only for teaching a *display* of a network.)

Even if *Rosenberg* '308 and *Tachibana* are combined in the manner proposed in the Office Action, however, the result would still lack the recited designation

unit that designates an icon corresponding to an input device and an icon corresponding to an output device, from among the displayed icons, with a unit that displays a setting screen for setting a combination function achievable by a combination of the input and output devices respectively corresponding to the designated icons. Moreover, neither of those patents discusses or in any way suggests an ability to cause a designated input device and a designated output device to perform processes based on a combination function set through such a setting screen.

Rosenberg '308 merely pertains to a simple technique of operating the icons and buttons displayed on the display device by clicking a mouse, and does not disclose or even hint at designating an icon corresponding to an input device and an icon corresponding to an output device, from among plural displayed icons, as recited in Claim1, because the icon displayed in *Rosenberg '308* does not essentially correspond to any device. Moreover, *Rosenberg '308* does not disclose or suggest displaying a setting screen for setting a combination function achievable by a combination of the input and output devices respectively corresponding to the designated icons, much less causing such input and output devices to perform processes based on a combination function set through such a setting screen.

In *Tachibana*, to enable a user to easily watch the connection relation of the nodes connected on the network, the respective connections of the nodes are displayed by using the respective icons, *Tachibana* (Figs. 13-15) makes provision for changing the design (color, shape) of the designated icon. However, nothing has been found or pointed out in *Tachibana* that would teach or suggest any of the units just mentioned that are absent

from *Rosenberg* '308. In particular, Applicant points out that, like *Rosenberg* '308, the *Tachibana* device does not in any pertain to or suggest causing input and output devices respectively corresponding to designated icons to perform processes: *Tachibana* intends to display the icons for monitoring the nodes, and contains no hint that the icons are displayed for designating nodes to perform processes. Accordingly, in *Tachibana*, even if an icon is designated, a user may be able to change the design of that icon, but that does not in any way suggest a setting screen by means of which a user could set a function to be performed by the device corresponding to the designated icon.

As a result, it is believed that independent Claim 1 is not at all disclosed, taught or suggested by *Rosenberg* '308, *Tachibana* or any possible combination thereof, and Applicant submits that Claim 1 is allowable over those patents.

Independent Claims 8 and 13 are method and computer-medium claims, respectively, corresponding to apparatus Claim 1, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicant's opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of

the invention, however, the individual consideration or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

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